

## 22. UNMASKED

Sienna sat in her room thinking about that climb that she had made months ago. From that point on, her fate was set. It was no longer a matter of choice. She had been affected by a reckless necessity. Her triumph over the mountain had convinced her that she could succeed at anything. So she has set up her confrontation with Jack. She knew how her life was again moving inevitably towards that same course. She needed to tell Lynette about what was happening.

“Warren, I need to get a hold of Lynette.”

“I can bring her here. But I’m not sure that it’s a good idea.”

“There’s things that I need to figure out. I need to talk to her.”

Against his better judgement, Warren agreed.

She was overjoyed to see Sienna.

“What’s been happening to you, my baby girl?”

Lynette had greeted her with a hug. She was brimming with life. Sienna had missed her friend. She now wondered how much she could share with her.

“Lynette, how have you been?”

“I’ve been working more hours. When I’m home now, the house seems empty. I miss you. You’ve been OK here.”

“Really no problems at all.”

She didn’t want to reveal too much yet. She still needed to feel things out.

“That night when I was attacked in my bedroom was the most frightening thing that I’ve ever experienced.”

Sienna thought about her mountainous climbs, how she had overcome her fear. But that night she had dealt with the unexpected. She had not been able to turn the tables on that summit. She had been vulnerable because of her lack of knowledge. But something else was troubling her. She had questions of Lynette. But she held back for the moment.

“I’m sorry that it happened like that in my house. I was supposed to protect you while you were there.”

“It wasn’t your fault.”

Lynette continued to maintain her own malfeasance.

“I could have checked the locks. I could have looked around the house.”

“You did what you could. How did he ever get in?”

“We think that he picked the lock.”

Lynette still wasn’t saying too much. Sienna felt the need to be guarded. She just wanted to blurt out that she had her memory back. But she first needed to convince herself about things. In doing that, she couldn’t trust Lynette.

She hated to admit that to herself. She wanted to ask about Jack. That would only be giving too much away. She was paralyzed in this interminable silence. Even not talking would only say too much. She needed to fake it. She let herself breakdown,

“Lynette, I’m just at a loss here.”

Lynette hugged her, “Don’t be upset, dear.” Lynette was keeping up the front as if nothing had ever happened. This itself said volumes to Sienna. Sienna needed to be crafty. But

she had spent days just trying to peer into her own psychology. She didn't think that she could take on another person at this point.

They sat across from each other on the bed. Sienna stood up and walked to the other end of the room. She needed some distance to size up the situation.

"It's weird. I seem to be getting these vague recollections. It's almost like a dream. But it seems to be more than that. That guy who I saw at the gas station. All these places that I had forgotten about. All this is coming back."

"Do you remember anything concrete? Anything real?"

"It's just a haze."

"It's a beginning. Sometime when patients regain their memories, it's almost like going through a fog. They see vague forms and shapes before any details stand out."

Sienna had kept her wits. She planted the seed. She made herself seem totally helpless, simply subject to these uncontrolled recollections. If Lynette knew something, it might put her on notice. Or she might want to contact Jack.

For her part, Sienna needed to see Dale again. She needed to make sure that he was on the same page as her. She had Lynette hang around a little longer with her.

"I think I'm getting worn out by the strain."

Lynette took the hint, "Well, I better get going."

She gave Sienna a big hug.

"You'll have to stop by here soon."

"I will."

Warren had already left. Jerry walked her to her car. After Lynette had gone, Sienna convinced Jerry to let her have a drink in the lounge. He'd wait for her in the lobby. From inside the lounge she made a call to Dale.

"You need to come here right away. I'll see you in the lounge."

It didn't take him long to get over to the motel. He just put everything aside and jumped in his car.

Dale spoke first, "It seems like old times us back in the hotel."

"I didn't have you come here to reminisce."

"Do you have your money yet?"

"That's the least of my worries."

"What do you know about Lynette?"

"There were these strange rumors about her and her cousin. That Jack liked his cousin."

"What?"

"You know what I'm saying. There was this boy that she had a crush on. And supposedly Jack was with the boy when he died in an accident. That was the story that I heard. But then someone else told me that the boy and his family moved to Chattanooga."

"In the other story, what did Lynette do?"

"They said that Lynette knew that it really wasn't an accident. That she covered things up for Jack."

"What do you think?"

"I told you that I heard all kinds of things. It might have been made up. They like to make up stories in a small town. It makes life seem more interesting."

"It doesn't sound like a story to me."

"What are you saying?"

"I don't know."

"It's not going to stop you from getting the money."

"I'm being held in this hotel by the sheriff. If I go check on money now, it will only draw the suspicions on to me. The less that they know the better."

"They'll eventually figure out who you are."

"They haven't so far. Only you and Jack know. Ray would if he had have seen me with Lenny. But he never did."

"Does Lynette know?"

"If she does, she'll tell Jack. I told her that I'm remembering things."

"That could be scary."

"Yes, it could. Don't forget about the money."

She was perturbed by his persistence. She thought that he had changed his tune the other night. Now, he was back making the money demands. She needed the money more than he did. She was waiting things out.